

PRESS RELEASE

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Graduates Learn the Hard and Soft Sides of Call Center Customer Service

October 17, 2007 Benton Harbor, MI – The first ten graduates of a new Call Center Training program will receive certificates of completion at the Benton Harbor MTEC facility this Thursday, October 18, at 8:30 a.m. The graduates learned about customer service, sales techniques, problem solving, telephone etiquette, and business communication as part of an effort to prepare the local workforce for careers with the various call centers throughout the area. The training was provided by Michigan Works! and Lake Michigan College.

A job fair will follow graduation ceremony with representatives from Aerotek, Chemical Bank, Concept to Promotion, Express One, Express Personnel, KitchenAid and Whirlpool. Many of these companies helped design the Call Center Training curriculum.

Business Development Manager, Pamela Timm, employs a staff of 36 people in Express One's call center. "The manner in which our employees handle customer calls is critical to gaining new and repeat business". She emphasized the need for balance between technical skills and soft skills. "Our employees need to have great customer service and friendliness, they need to be empathic and understand the customer's situation to offer options and solve their problems. We train them to listen, hear, and then confirm. On top of all that they need to understand the software systems we use and pay attention to detail."

One of the ten graduates, Susan Gray, said that in addition to computer training, she learned about different personality types. "My mother always told me to treat others how I would like them to treat me, but the class taught us how to figure out a caller's personality, and then customize the way we deal with them based on that. That was really helpful."

"There's a lot of psychology to this," stated Lisa Groolsby, who teaches the Call Center Simulation component of the training. The simulation module gives each student a realistic experience of what the job will be like and scores the students in different areas. "They need to be able to multi-task under stressful situations."

The \$850.00 tuition for each of the ten graduates was provided by Michigan Works!. Lake Michigan College, which will offer the next Call Center Training beginning November 5th, provided the training. Applicants can register by calling 926-4296

Michigan Works! Berrien Cass Van Buren is a non-profit organization providing employment services to tri-county employers and jobseekers. They aim to strengthen the regional economy through Workforce Development. Contact Candice Elders at 1-800-533-5800 ext.1144 for more information. ###

Attached Photo Caption: Instructor, Lisa Groolsby helps Susan Gray through the Call Center Simulation